



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

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MAYOR BARRETT CALLS FOR NEW IDEAS FOR EAST LIBRARY

Request for proposal for developers issued today

MILWAUKEE---Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett today challenged the development community to help the City reinvent Milwaukee Public Library's East Library as part of the vibrant East side community.

The Milwaukee Public Library (MPL) and the Department of City Development issued a Request for Proposal for developers to acquire the current East Library site and redevelop it with a mixed-use building which would house a 21st century library on the ground floor and a secondary use above it to serve the community. Conceptual proposals are being sought and MPL will seek community input as it reviews concepts and selects a development team to build this vision.

"Public libraries are key to society's educational growth," said Mayor Barrett. "But we need to think differently on how libraries function in a rapidly changing world."

Paula Kiely, MPL Library Director agrees, and identifies the East Library "as the perfect opportunity to showcase a public-private approach to replacing an obsolete building with a modern structure that serves MPL and the East Side neighborhoods and business community."

Ald. Nik Kovac, who represents the East Side and serves as a trustee on the MPL Board of Trustees, has been very involved in planning for a new East Library.

"This new development will add to the economic development of the business district and bring a great center for learning to the neighborhood," said Ald. Kovac. "I look forward to getting the community involved in the process."

MPL's East Library is located at 1910 E. North Avenue. This one-story, 13,800 square foot building opened for business in 1968 and still has the original interior design, lighting and heating, ventilation and cooling systems (HVAC) 43 years later. In 2010, more than 140,000 people visited East Library to use 18 public computers, check out books, DVDs, CDs, and use the community meeting room.

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An innovative new Milwaukee Public Library Villard Square branch is currently under construction at the corner of N. 35th St. and W. Villard Ave. This mixed-use model features a library on the ground floor with approximately 13,000 square feet of space, with three levels of apartments above it. The apartments are being marketed as “grandfamily housing” for families where grandparents are the primary caregivers for their grandchildren. The library is scheduled to open in October 2011. For information on the Villard Square model, go to http://www.mpl.org/file/villard_index.htm.

Proposals for the East Library project are due on or before Monday, August 15, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. To view the RFP online, go to <http://city.milwaukee.gov/EastLibrary/Main.htm>

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